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Smith - Oration - 1842

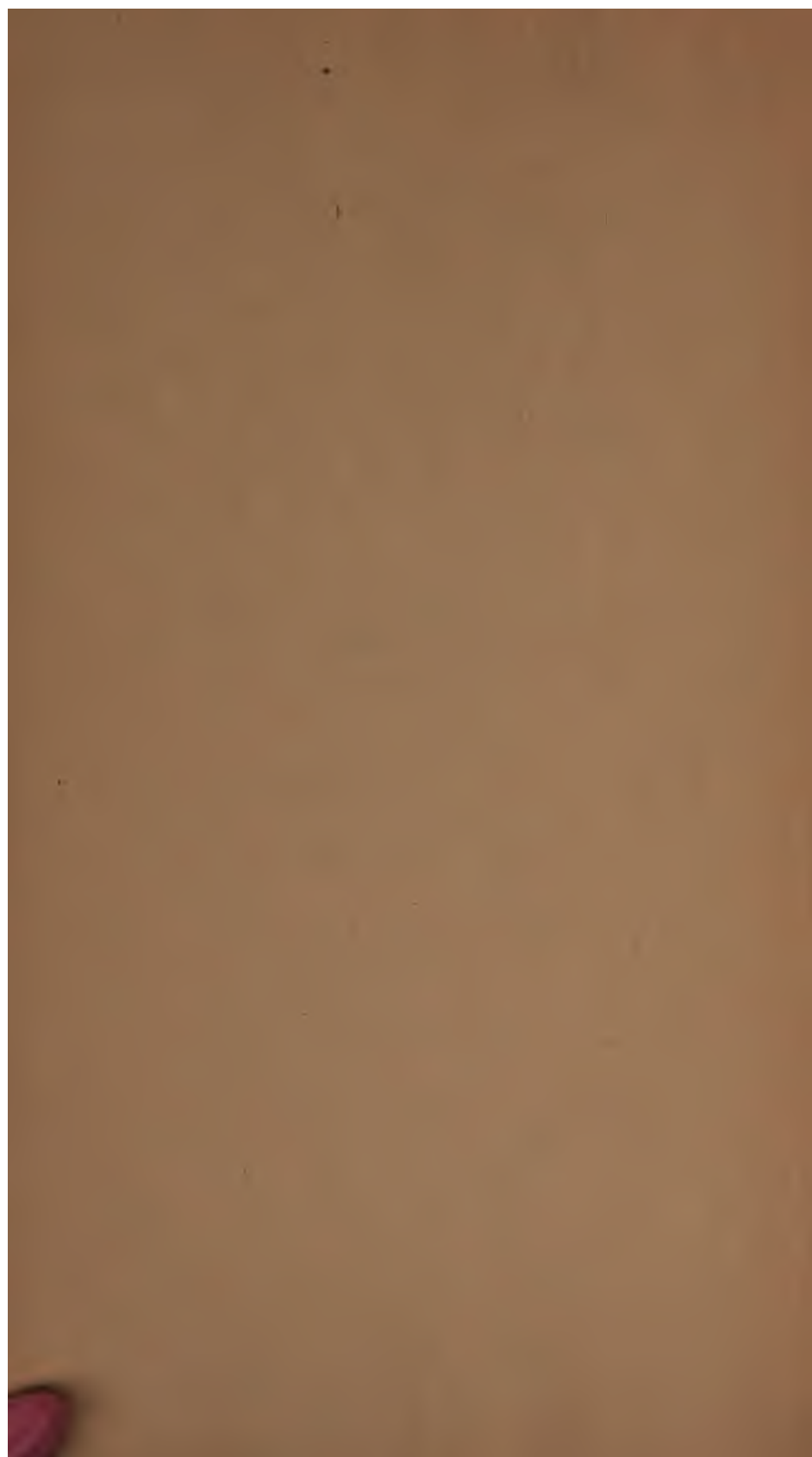
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OF TEXAS.

1849



AN
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New Haven, August 15, 1849.

By HON. ASHBEL SMITH,
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ORATION.

Gentlemen of the Society—Fellow Citizens,

I PRESENT myself before you, coming from the remotest state of the Union; and though it will not long remain the most distant, nevertheless the region whence I hail, is of all the territories now constituting this great republic, the most unlike in climate and physical conditions generally to the old thirteen states. And whatever may be thought of the policy of enlarging the borders of our country, it is the manifest destiny of the Anglo-Saxon, to swarm even beyond our present limits, and to extend institutions distinctively American, over regions still more diverse in natural character, than those incorporated within a few years into the American Union. Notwithstanding the recent settlement of the United States, the free American population both of the North and South, is eminently homogeneous. The pioneers who are subduing the western and south-western wilds, peopling those vast solitudes, bearing onward with marvelous speed, the banner of true civilization to the Pacific Ocean and the islands of the great seas, and securing every step of their progress by fortresses of the school-house, the printing press and pulpit; these pioneers, I say, are sprung from the hardy loins of the old Atlantic states, and impress at once their distinctive character on any emigrants that may join them from other parts

of the world. They naturally retain, and will of course do so for a generation or two, the habits of thought and physical action derived from their fathers. But their descendants who shall in future time dwell in the mild regions of the lower Rio Grande, will be subject to a climate and to natural influences, widely different from those which prevail in the land of their fathers. Casting our eyes over the nations of the earth, along with a general uniformity in the great outlines of person and traits of character, we perceive no small diversity in their minuter features. These diversities it is customary to attribute to climate and physical influences; man in his corporeal and mental nature is commonly regarded as being easily molded under the operation of the four elements of ancient philosophy. Standing in my own state of Texas, surrounded by descendants of the pilgrims of Plymouth and of the settlers of Jamestown, I mused on what would be the effect of that warm and genial climate on the descendants in future generations of my fellow citizens then around me. Will they retain the iron frames and strong nerves, the clear heads and bold hearts of their forefathers? Rising upwards from this inquiry and embracing a broader field in my comprehension, I contemplated *the permanent and unchangeable identity of the human race*. This is not a matter of uninteresting curiosity. The most interesting inquiry which can employ our thoughts, regarded merely as a question of speculative philosophy, is undoubtedly the future condition of man, when the grave shall have closed over him the scenes of this world; but next after this in interest and closely connected with it, is

the inquiry into the natural history of man since the first period of his existence on this globe to the present time. The permanent sameness of the human race, indeed, seems indissolubly bound up with our belief in immortality in the life to come. Has man always been what he now is? We live amidst incessant and perceptible changes of every thing around us. Natural history tells us that races of animals which formerly inhabited the earth are now extinct; that of others some species are lost and their places supplied by species of different sizes, powers, and habits. Has the race of man in his physical powers, his form and dimensions, or in his moral and intellectual nature, undergone any change since his creation? Is he larger or smaller, stronger or weaker, is the race improved, has it degenerated, are his moral dispositions or intellectual powers changed? Are the soldiers of Buena Vista and of the valley of Mexico of the same size and physical mould as were the heroes who begirt and captured Troy? Were the builders of the pyramids, more than thirty centuries ago, or they who fought at Marathon more than twenty centuries since, on the old continent, altogether like the race on this new continent, who build railroads and fought at Bunker Hill and New Orleans, middle sized men, five feet six or eight inches high? Were the priests of Egypt where learning was a mystery, of the same port and general capacity as the honored professors who open wide the doors of knowledge, in the venerable institution where we are now assembled?

In writings of all ages which have been preserved, we find sometimes the direct assertion that the human

race has undergone marked changes, and more frequently allusions to them as admitted facts. Poets have commonly represented the changes to the disadvantage of our race. Homer, describing the feats of one of his heroes in hurling stones or rather rocks, says they were of a size which not twice ten men of his degenerate days could have lifted from the earth. Virgil who copied Homer pretty closely, other poets and troubadours have expressed a like opinion. Pliny observes of the human height, that the whole race of mankind is daily becoming smaller. And in our own day, Sir Walter Scott, has represented his heroes as surpassing in prowess and physical force the men of our time. We have always been taught to regard Edmund Ironsides and Richard Cœur de Lion, with their stalwart companions in heavy armor, wielding their ponderous battle-axes and two handed swords, as possessing a force which would shame the light armed soldier of modern warfare. The Indians too, as Mr. Jefferson relates of the Shawnees, have their traditions of a former race superior to the present. But why refer to the distant—are there not in this house septuagenarians who will stoutly maintain to my face, that the comrades of their youth were more athletic than the effeminate youngsters of this day?

“ κελνοισι δ' ἄν οὕτως

Τῶν, οἳ νῦν βροτοὶ εἰσιν ἐπιχθόνιοι, μαχέοντο.”

Is this opinion correct?

On the other hand, some ingenious philosophers have held quite the contrary opinion, to wit, that the human race since its creation has been gradually im-

proving and developing itself both in its intellectual powers and in its physical organization. Lord Monboddo, a man of great erudition, in a ponderous quarto, enters into long argument with copious citation of various facts to prove that the human race commenced in the monkey tribe, from which it was slowly evolved, developed and perfected into its present form and powers. J. J. Rousseau, seems to have held nearly the same opinion. M. de Maillet, many years since French consul in Egypt, published speculations on our origin, &c., under the title of Interviews with an Indian Philosopher, in which he aims to show that all animals, and man with the rest, originated in the sea. And quite recently a work of much scientific pretension and written in elaborate style, entitled Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation, endeavors to prove that man was not originally created by a simple act of God, but has been a result of a successive development of animal life, commencing with its very lowest forms and proceeding by a regular gradation of efforts, until he has been elaborated into man as we now behold him; and the author boldly conjectures that the present is not a permanent type of our race, but that a new man or being far superior in his physical structure, and of higher mental capacities, may be expected to succeed to, and supplant here the present biped, and that all this will be effected by the continued operation of laws of nature long since established. These may appear to be, and indeed are extreme opinions, and to some may seem not worthy of serious consideration, notwithstanding the array of pretended facts and science wherewith they have been sustained. Is this

class of opinions correct? Is the opinion correct in any degree, that man as a race has been developed, improved or perfected in his attributes and powers?

It is my purpose to consider now a generally enough prevailing notion, that the human race has undergone and is undergoing changes or modifications in its color, form, dimensions, intellectual powers and moral qualities, by the influences of climate, civilization, luxury and other causes which may be unknown. As we have seen, the human type has been ever regarded by a large portion of mankind, not exactly as phenomenal and indefinite, but still as fluctuating pretty loosely within broad and not very certain limits. I shall endeavor to show the incorrectness of this notion; to prove by a brief appeal to geological science, by the remains of bodies preserved by art, by bones in ancient sepulchres, by various monuments that have survived to us from a remote antiquity and intermediate periods, in short by the various records of itself which humanity has strewed along the path of time, that man has undergone no change in his corporeal structure or moral nature, since the earliest times of which we have any memorials; and thus by strict and logical inference, to deduce the unchangeable sameness of our race in all ages of the world past and to come. It may seem to have escaped me that the earth is peopled by nations white, black and bronze colored: not at all. It is not within my scope to show how a black man may become white, or a white man black; and those who have attempted the problem, have not furnished a satisfactory solution: they have not even established the fact as having occurred within the limits of history. Phi-

losophers have regarded the whole human family as divided into different branches: I adopt the subdivision which embraces them in three great branches, to wit, the Caucasian, the Ethiopian, and the Mongolian, because I believe it the true one. The type of these branches respectively is permanent and unchangeable. In pursuing this matter I shall appeal to tangible, measurable facts—to facts many of which have been verified by personal observation, and most of which are more or less within the reach of all. I shall too, limit myself almost exclusively to the Caucasian branch of the human family, as their memorials are the most ancient and certain, and presented in uninterrupted series; because we ourselves are of this branch, and forasmuch as the brief practical conclusion to which I shall come, is applicable to ourselves. If I make no allusion to the long-lived antediluvians, it is because they have left no trace of their existence, other than in the writings of Moses. In like manner, I do not touch the origin of mankind from a single pair, though I fully believe in its truth. If I have not attempted to enter those primeval ages, where history has made no paths, I hope it will not be deemed that I have shirked any part of the argument.

Fossil bones of animals are of comparatively common occurrence in all quarters of the world; in North and South America, in Europe, Asia and Africa. The first thing perhaps that strikes the looker on, is the enormous size of some of these fossil bones, which must have belonged to animals much larger than any now living. But it is not their size which constitutes their chief interest, but the fact that they belonged to

animals of some of which the races are utterly extinct, and have been extinct from a time of which we have no records in history ; for the period of their inhabiting the globe, was anterior to the creation of man. And geology informs us that the earth itself in the mean time, has undergone great physical revolutions. Other bones belong to extinct species of animals, but of which collateral species of the same genera still exist. Seeing then that the globe was once inhabited by animals more or less differing from the present tribes, the inquiry naturally arises, whether there may not formerly have been a genus of mankind, analogous to the present yet differing from it, as is true of the inferior animal creation—whether the present races may not be a modification or species of some larger, gigantic, or at least different genus of man which has become extinct, or been modified, or has degenerated into the present inhabitants of the earth. Is man, the head and master of the animal creation, fashioned as we are taught in his maker's image, but a variable, nay evanescent type of existence ? From all the examinations of the earth and the discoveries in fossil osteology hitherto made, not the slightest countenance is derived to this supposition ; nor have we from this source, the shadow of a reason for conjecturing that any race of man ever existed previously to the present ones now swarming in the different zones. No fossil human skeleton, not a bone or tooth has ever been found. Nor are we permitted to suppose that they may have perished in the long lapse of geological ages. Human bones are as solid, and resist decay as well, as those of other animals. Bones of birds, small

quadrupeds and reptiles are found entire, but in all the geological formations embalming the fossil remains of extinct animals, not a human bone has ever been discovered which naturalists believe to have been of antemosaic origin. This unanimity of opinion is significant, when we bear in mind that many naturalists of large acquirements have not held the doctrines revealed in the Scriptures, but have regarded man as of the same evanescent nature and limited scope as other animals. The reports in newspapers of the discovery of fossil human bones of gigantic dimensions have invariably proved to be incorrect, and the bones, on examination, have been recognized as having belonged to some other animal. One of the most singular errors was that made by Scheutzer more than a hundred years ago, who supposed he had obtained a fossil human skeleton:—from description, Cuvier pronounced it to belong to a salamander. A careful examination of it afterwards in 1811 in Holland, by this great naturalist, with the skeleton of a salamander by its side, confirmed his previous opinion. The mistake of Scheutzer should teach us not to be surprised that persons on our side of the Atlantic have fallen into a similar error in regard to fossil bones found on our continent. We may then assert as an established fact, so far as negative evidence can prove one, that there is not the least ground for supposing that any race or species of man whatever occupied this globe previously to its present inhabitants; in other words, that the actual race of man is the only one that has existed on the earth since its primeval creation. “No tablet of bronze nor obelisks of granite record his deeds,

no work of human skill proves that he lived, no fragment of his bones indicates that he died.”

I come now to the second part of my subject, which is to prove that man, such as he now is, has experienced no change or essential modification since his original creation. It would be quite contrary to my idea of sound philosophy to appeal to the Bible, and especially to the Old Testament, in any scientific inquiry, or in establishing any general truth of physical science. The Bible was not written for a text-book of natural philosophy. To communicate facts, it employs the language of ordinary life without regard to technical exactness. Yet it is an important fact that the investigations of geology and natural history tend to establish the Mosaic account of the creation of the earth.

From all the lights which science and authentic memorials throw on this subject, there is good reason to believe that the human race is not more than seven or eight thousand years old. Our oldest monuments do not reach back beyond three thousand five hundred years. Moses lived about three thousand three hundred and eighty years ago; Homer flourished about two thousand eight hundred years since. Chinese history, about whose antiquity so much has been said, and believed too, by sciolists credulous of rumors and traditions brought from that remotest region of the world, but skeptical of history which has duly recorded events that have occurred nearer home;—Chinese history, I repeat, has no authentic record, memorial or monument of an older date than two thousand two hundred and fifty years ago, a period more recent by

a thousand years, than the monuments and histories that have survived to our day in Egypt and the adjacent countries. It is not intended to assert that we have no evidence that the countries alluded to were not inhabited at periods more remote than those mentioned, but that the monuments and writings now in existence cannot be referred to a more ancient date. Of Egypt we possess certain and permanent memorials of the greatest antiquity. These reach back, as already intimated, to a period ranging from three thousand to three thousand five hundred years ago. The obelisk of Luxor, now standing in the Place de la Concorde of Paris, has been known for three thousand two hundred years. It is one of those monuments of a hoary but highly cultivated age, which people of the Caucasian race have left in Egypt and other eastern lands. We have mummies scarcely less old. From the repositories of them which still exist, great numbers have been brought away: the curious have gazed at them; they have been subjected to the scrutiny of the scientific:—several of them have been exhibited in our country. In the British Museum at London, in the Egyptian gallery of the Louvre, in the Egyptian museum of the Vatican, which is most rich in mummies, I have studied with intense interest these precious remains which have survived for thirty centuries that decay usually so rapid when the soul has left the body. I have tried to question them; I have asked them what was our race when they lived and moved over this earth. The dry mummies answered: the old Egyptians were of the pure Caucasian or white race, on an average of the middle stature of our own

time. They are apparently rather slender, but this appearance may be occasioned by their extreme desiccation and the process of embalming. But, their straight hair, oval countenances, large facial angle, rounded full chin, with their stature and white color, set forth the fact that the human form in its more perfect development has suffered no change or modification in the last three thousand years:—and it is to be borne in mind that this is an epoch about midway from the creation of man to our age. If no perceptible change in dimensions, or modification of form has been wrought in the lapse of three thousand years, it is philosophical to conclude that no length of time, the same influences operating, would be adequate to effect change or modification. That the mummies belong to the period just stated, is proved by inscriptions in hieroglyphics and the enchorial language on the sarcophagi and public monuments, and by the records of written history, from Herodotus who visited Egypt twenty-five centuries ago, down to our own times. Of the mental capacity and acquirements of the old Egyptians we may form a tolerably correct estimate from the ruins still adorning their land, and from the fact that for centuries Egypt was resorted to by the Greeks as to the parent and depository of knowledge. We may then fairly conclude that man of the Caucasian race was three thousand years ago in body and understanding what he is to-day.

Descending in time, we find another argument of great weight, I should rather say, irrefragable proof of the permanent identity of the human species, in those precious models of the human form which

have survived in the productions of ancient sculpture. These priceless relics of old Greece and Rome give us certain assurance that man, in size as well as in his minutest anatomy, was the same two thousand years ago as in this nineteenth century. The finished pieces of ancient statuary, those trophies of art, are still the unrivaled models of manliness and grace in one sex, and of the most exquisite beauty and loveliness in the other. Rightly understood, they also show that in their larger dimensions there has been neither increase nor degeneracy. The Medicean Venus at Florence is four feet eleven and a half inches in height, the actual mean average stature of woman. Sculpture is especially valuable to us in our present inquiry, as it speaks a language that cannot be misunderstood or misinterpreted. The Greek and Roman languages in which their literature is embalmed are no longer spoken tongues. We may mistake their meaning; not so the sculptured marble. The Apollo Belvidere, the Venus di Medici, the Laocoon, the Fighting Gladiator, the Dying Gladiator, the Venus of Melos, Diana with the Hind, speak to our eyes language that cannot be misunderstood, words that will ever be a living tongue; they inform us that the same manly beauty and female loveliness, that the strength and grace which delighted the ancient Greeks on the old continent twenty centuries ago, command our admiration now, and are felt to be models of perfection of the human form by us, inhabiting a continent to them unknown and climes lying over the vast ocean that stretches far beyond their Islands of the Blest. We may, too, apply the measuring rule and set down the dimensions of these marbles, as well as inhale their beauty.

The most exquisite pieces of statuary are known to be about two thousand years old. If then the human race, in two thousand years or more, has suffered no perceptible change in those minute lines and that exquisite conformation which we still regard as constituting almost ideal beauty, we may rest assured that it has remained unchanged since its creation, and unchangeable by any external influences to which it has hitherto been exposed. But it is not merely as monuments of the invariable type of physical man that ancient statuary has the highest interest for us, but also as exhibiting the permanent sameness of the moral and intellectual faculties of our species. And it is not the less interesting or instructive, as it represents to us the lighter and superficial emotions of the moment, as well as the deeper, grander and more permanent passions of our nature. A walk through one of the great galleries of ancient statuary brings us into closer communion with members of the human family of by-gone times than would whole volumes of stately history. The playfulness of the child, the light smile of the woman, the frown of the boy, graven on the marble, yet sitting so lifelike on its surface that we almost expect to see the expression vanish while we gaze, excite responsive, pleasurable emotions in our own hearts and warm us with a feeling of perfect kindred with our race two thousand years ago. The sculptured marble alone, no words could embody and preserve in their entirety and minute phases these varying impulses and emotions of every day life—the same in Greece then as in this city this day. Many of the ancient statues are deemed faithful portraits of his-

torical personages and present in their physiognomies the more prominent and durable traits of character by which written history informs us the originals were distinguished. In the Louvre I saw an exquisitely sculptured head of Epicurus. The bony, nervous, capacious forehead, the clear eye well set in its finely chiselled orbit, were eminently intellectual, while the large mouth seemed to indicate the almost purely sensuous voluptuary. I ought to add that this large mouth was relieved from any expression of torpid bulkiness or warm sensuality, by the great delicacy of its fine lines indicating the power of subtle and rapid intellection. These craniological and physiognomical developments seemed to me to explain fully the diverse and almost conflicting opinions and doctrines handed down to us as taught by the author of the Epicurean philosophy. In the Museo Borbonico at Naples, I saw the statue of Aristides: the lofty carriage, the pharisaic disdain of the countenance tell us that weak human nature in Greece then, as in America now, could not wholly repress the expression of its sense of superior excellence. As I gazed on the old Athenian, I felt that his countrymen banished him, not more for his reputation for wisdom than for his haughty and ungracious consciousness of possessing it. I might cite instances indefinitely, quite as striking, but I should tire you. It may, too, be suspected that possibly these statues are not likenesses;—they would not then lose aught of their intrinsic value; they would still represent durable traits of character and fitting emotions, observed two thousand years ago, the same as are daily witnessed among us. Those statues, too,

where the poet-artists have embodied the conceptions of their glowing fancies in ideal pieces, confirm no less conclusively the entire and unchanged sameness of human feelings. In Rome I stood before the Dying Gladiator on the old Hill of the Capitol:—the ruins of the amphitheater of Titus, where under the Cæsars, gladiators fought, were full in my view;—the immortal verse of Byron has only clothed in words the more eloquent marble. The Dying Gladiator rebuilds to our imagination the amphitheater, and repeoples it with its victims and its crowds. We gaze on that statue: how eloquent is that marble!—our thoughts are chained to the dying man. How keenly and with the whole soul do we sympathise with him. That countenance betrays no pain from the wound through which life is slowly ebbing; his thoughts are far distant in his own home with his wife and little ones:—his best and strongest affections are identical with our own. In Florence I saw the famed group of Niobe and her children. The countenance of Niobe expresses horror at the impending destruction, mingled with all a mother's frenzied anxiety for her children;—an adult daughter terror-stricken but chiefly for herself;—the youngest child rushing into its mother's outstretched arms, fright depicted on its countenance, but its face turned upwards to its parent with a blended expression of fearing danger and of feeling security in her mother's embrace,—tell us that maternal love and the instinctive sense of protection therefrom have suffered no change in the lapse of twenty centuries. I might go on indefinitely with examples even to the Venus Callipyge, with the unloosened zone and those degrading exhi-

bitions of weakness, discreetly shut up in the Fallic Museum, to prove the permanent sameness of those emotions and passions of our nature, which ally man, despite his great faculties, with the inferior animal creation.

Large quantities of human bones, and numerous entire skeletons are still preserved, which belong to that period in the history of our species which I have been last considering, to wit, from one thousand eight hundred to two thousand five hundred years ago. These abound in Rome and its neighborhood, and inscriptions and bas-reliefs fix the epoch and in many instances identify the individual. We have the bones and the sarcophagus of Scipio Barbatus, one of the great family of the Scipios, who lived three hundred years before our Savior's time. It would have been easy to cut short my argument by proceeding at once from the mummies of Egypt to summon these bones to give their testimony in the matter before us. But I have preferred to dwell somewhat on statuary, partly because it exhibits the average of the human form at the time it was wrought, and chiefly because it portrays those individual peculiarities and fine varieties of character and disposition which in the aggregate constitute human nature, and thus it evidences the permanent identity of the moral constitution of the human species. This the bony skeleton fails to show, and the mummy only enables us to conjecture what was the moral and intellectual nature of the living being. I have wandered through the sepulchres of Rome:—in some still lie, in undisturbed repose, bones of her imperial citizens where they were ages ago reposed;

others contain those of the household of the Cæsars ;— I have groped through the catacombs near the Eternal City which were hiding places of early Christians during their lives and their burial places after death ;—I have examined with care the bones resting there. The dry bones speak and confirm our general position. And I may here observe that no human skeleton has been found at any time in any part of the world differing in dimensions or conformation from those of the nations which now inhabit the earth. There is no reason to believe in a race of gigantic size ; the Hebrew word applied to the sons of Anak in the Old Testament means violent and fierce men ; and we may without skepticism fancy that these sons of Anak loomed large through the fears of the Jewish spies who reported them to be giants. We have no reason to suppose that any individual ever reached the height of nine feet. The Patagonians are reported as the largest known people ; yet the tallest man measured by the Spanish navigators was seven feet one and a quarter inches—not so tall as Porter of Kentucky. As an extreme on the other hand, Sir Cornwallis Harris, in his account of the expedition to Shoa, mentions a tribe four and a half feet high, but this measurement requires more careful verification. I am afraid we must set aside the figures of Homer and Herodotus.

Coming down from ancient Greece and Rome, I reach the period of the Crusades and of chivalry, some ten centuries ago, and the centuries thereafter succeeding. The heroes of those times, marvels of human or rather superhuman strength, storming castles,

knocking over like pigmies the common herd of mankind when they deigned to honor a yeoman with a blow, frightening and delighting at the same moment love sick damsels ;—these heroes of chivalry as well as the more historical personages of past centuries were middle sized men ; men ranging from five feet six or eight inches high, to six feet. I have, in the Horse Armory of the Tower of London, in the Museum of Artillery at Paris and elsewhere, taken the measure of the armor actually worn by the old warriors :—it is suited in size to men of the present average middle stature.

All the facts hitherto cited, except those of fossil osteology, have been derived from the old world, for the obvious reason that we there find the most ancient and certain memorials of our own race, and the only ones of its highest or Caucasian type. The antiquities of Mexico and Peru are not well enough known, nor their dates established so as to afford much light in our present inquiry. I shall however draw one illustration of our argument from our own continent. I visited a few years since a large mound situated on the banks of the Ohio, some miles below Wheeling. The regularity of its form, a cone ninety feet high, in the center of an alluvial plain, led to the belief that it was artificial. On penetrating by shafts into its interior, quantities of bone earth imperfectly charred, and various ornaments there found, proved it to be a funereal mound. One entire skeleton was found upright which was left in position at the time I visited the place. It was of full middle stature and without the slightest peculiarity of structure. The Indians

who inhabited this region, when first invaded by the white race, had no tradition respecting this mound. It appears to have been the sepulchre of a people antecedent to the Indians themselves—who in their turn are now passing away. On the mound were several large trees, and an examination of one of them showed, as we are informed, that it was several centuries old. It is probable that this skeleton, there found with other human relics, had lain buried for a period as long at least as the age of the tree. This nameless skeleton, without record, memorial or tradition, had lived and beheld the waters of the Ohio flow, centuries before the discovery of our continent by Columbus. *Our* ancestors came from Europe—whence and by what route did his progenitors reach the Ohio? What was his nation, language; what his occupations here, what his hopes hereafter? These questions cannot be answered;—but he was one of us,—full kinsman of our race.

I have attempted no solution of the diversities of the different branches of the human family. Time would fail, should I go into a consideration of this subject; nor should I do so if time permitted, for I have nothing new to bring forward. While all mankind form but one species, in the language of natural history; facts prove that the varieties of our species are more prominent than is believed by those philosophers who deduce these varieties from climatic causes in their anxiety to maintain their interpretation of the Mosaic account of the creation. Along with mummies of the Caucasian race three thousand years old, I have seen several of the pure African or Ethiopian variety. The black skin, woolly hair, retreating forehead, broad

cheek bones, flat nose, projecting teeth and long under jaw, with other characteristics, identify the black mummy of Thebes, with the African to-day on either side of the Atlantic. I fear we must be content to remain in ignorance why the Creator impressed certain peculiarities on the different branches of the human family. I do not know that the cause or occasion has ever been revealed to us; and it has hitherto eluded science. The peculiarities appear permanent. We see the fact and must admit it; it does not militate against the opinion expressed to-night. The permanence of these varieties confirms our general argument.

One fact has been made apparent in the course of our argument, though attention has not been specially called to it:—it is that the Caucasian branch whose history we have at all times kept fully in view, has made no approximations towards the Ethiopian or Mongolian:—we have watched it in its journey down the path of time from the remotest ages to 1849 of the Christian era; we have made successive measurements of it; it has exhibited no vacillations, it has made no approaches to the other branches. In civilization or in barbarism, on the hot plains of Arabia, or on the shores of the Baltic, the man has been the same. Where, from physical circumstances, the race cannot be kept up to the standard, nature solves the problem by destroying the race. We have a notable instance in the fact that inhabitants of large cities who do not, by occasional visits to the country, get an infusion of vigor, cease in three or four generations to be able to rear children.

I have thus endeavored briefly to prove by an appeal to geological science, that the present race of man is the only one that ever inhabited this globe. Contemplating then the Caucasian branch through the various relics and memorials that have survived to us from remotest ages, let us by aid of the imagination kept under the dominion of strict science and sober philosophy, breathe the breath of life into the dry mummies of Egypt which walked this earth between three and four thousand years ago; let us animate with Promethean heat the statuary of ancient Greece; let us clothe with flesh the bones repositied in Roman sepulchres from seventeen to twenty-two centuries ago; let us fill again with living men, and set before us in array, the armor which from five to ten centuries ago was borne by knights of Western Europe to the Holy Land, to battle against the Saracen for the Holy Sepulchre; let us thus bring into presence our race for upwards of thirty centuries, and compare them all with the men of our day;—we shall find that man has undergone no appreciable change in form or dimensions. And, I repeat, if thirty centuries can effect no change, under all the diversity of climate and conditions to which he has been subject, we may securely repose in the belief of his unchangeable sameness.

If now we institute a comparison as to the mental powers of our race in all former periods down to the present time, we shall see that the human mind in its highest manifestations, among the Caucasian race, has ever exhibited the same calibre, the same capacity, has ever preserved the sameness of its intellectual

proportions. On this most copious and interesting topic I shall be very brief. Numerous and most important have been the inventions and discoveries of modern times, vast the additions that have been made to the stores of knowledge, but the human intellect does not appear to have increased in its powers nor on the other hand to have lost aught of its force or acuteness. Homer and Shakspeare are alike in their almost matchless delineations of human character:—the Elements of Euclid will go down to the remotest posterity with the Principia of Newton and the Celestial Mechanics of Laplace:—in criticism Schlegel may vie with Aristotle; while the Stagyrte's metaphysics rivals in subtilty the transcendental philosophy of Kant, and his natural history ranks with Buffon, Cuvier and Audubon:—Plato may be read with Butler's Analogy or J. Edwards on the Will:—Socrates may be placed by the side of John Locke. The earth's motion round the sun, discovered by Pythagoras, the laws governing the motions of the heavenly bodies, discovered by Kepler, and the universal laws of gravitation, discovered by Newton, belong to those eternal truths which are revealed only to the sublimest genius. The pyramids whose erection implies a perfect knowledge of the simple mechanical powers, and which seem to be the highest effort of the human mind to represent immobility, may be compared with the Electric Telegraph of Morse, which seems in an opposite sense almost to have annihilated motion;—it seems nearly to solve the problem of the schoolmen, of change from place to place without motion through the intermediate space. Contempla-

ting for an instant the other two branches of the human family, the Mongolian and Ethiopian; what have the nations of these branches ever contributed to the knowledge and civilization of mankind? Nothing. Genius, moral and intellectual power are the prerogatives of the Caucasian—and they are the prerogatives of the race and not of the climate where he happens to dwell. He may lose for a time his civilization; but he ever bears within him the gift of bountiful Providence, a self-germinating capacity for regeneration.

I stated in the commencement of these remarks, that an old idea has been recently brought forward by the author of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, who attempts to prove that man was not originally created by a simple act of God, but has been the result of a successive development of animal life commencing in its lowest forms, and proceeding in conformity with certain preëstablished laws of nature, that man as he now appears is not a permanent type or form of animated being, but only a point in the progress of creation; that we are only preparations for, and causes of, superior developments of humanity. It is not meant that man as an individual is capable by his nature of infinite progress towards perfection—an opinion to which we all subscribe; but that out of the present race, a superior one will be evolved by the mere operation of the physical laws of the world. If this doctrine of development were true, I would adopt it; I know no heresy but untruth. But if we think by this hypothesis of gradual improvement by nature on her former works, to diminish any difficulty of crea-

tive power, we sadly deceive ourselves. It is, so far as we can form an opinion, as easy to say to the dry dust of the desert, Be fashioned into breathing, thinking man with all his great faculties mature, as to set the slime of the pool at work and in the long course of ages to evolve him. The road is only lengthened, no difficulty is removed. The truth is, there is not a single fact in natural history, rightly interpreted, which countenances this hypothesis. The soul by its own nature is conscious that we are not merely animated clay fashioned by chance into our present mould, governed by laws ordained by a distant and unheeding God. We must needs believe that he who breathed into us the breath of life, stands in a near and paternal relation to us, watches over and preserves us; and that while created capable of infinite improvement and progress towards perfection, to be completed in another state of existence, the permanent sameness of our race in its corporeal forms, its moral nature and intellectual powers, will be preserved so long as this earth is the habitation of man.

I return from this digression into which I have unwittingly strayed, to revert to the first and main inquiry which I have presented. Standing in my own state of Texas and contemplating prospectively the effects which its fertile soil and ardent sun shall exert on the descendents of the present inhabitants in future generations, beholding with a sure foresight now, because enlightened by past experience, the Anglo-Saxon race which is fated to overrun and possess in perpetuity the vast region extending from our southern boundary to the Isthmus of Panama; for whether the Spanish

countries of North America shall ever be incorporated into this Union or not, it is their sure destiny to be occupied by the hardier people descending from the north—contemplating, I say, the future condition of the Anglo-Saxon race in the southern portions of the North American continent, I inquire will this people from natural and therefore uncontrollable causes undergo important modifications in its corporeal energies and moral and intellectual character? and appealing to the history of the Caucasian race in all time past, I answer confidently, No. No. We hear so much of the influence of climate, of the enervating effects of hot regions, nay we see our frail bodies so sensitive to every wind that blows over us, that we are tempted to imagine that man is the very type of changeableness; yet the race is permanent and unchangeable. The Caucasian whether dwelling on the hot plains of Mesopotamia, whose history is now being dug up in the ruins of Nimroud or old Nineveh—in the dry valley of Egypt—under the blue sky of Italy—or beneath the gray skies and dripping clouds of England and the north of Europe—or swarming on our Atlantic coast vexed with the extremes of heat and cold, whether enervated by the imperial debaucheries and Apician daintiness of Roman civilization, or living in hyperborean regions naked as the Pict,—this Caucasian race under all these diverse circumstances presents a permanent, immutable family likeness and sameness in body and mental capacity. Feeble man, trembling under every external impression, is yet more immutable in his permanent character, less yielding indeed, than East and West Rocks, which rear their

fronts in defying majesty to every change of the elements. The *ἐξίς καθεστηκυῖα*, the constituting habitude of the Caucasian branch is the very type of immutableness. And will the Anglo-Saxon, the most vigorous offshoot of the whole human family, the world-subduing race already belting the globe with its power, —will this race, swarming on the plains of Texas, in the valleys of California and soon to spread over Mexico, become enervated by natural causes, and assimilated to the degenerate or rather inferior mongrel tribes which have hitherto droned away existence in those fair countries? As soon might we expect the descendants of the Pilgrims to become assimilated in color and mental character to the wild Indian who once had his haunt on this beautiful spot where now flourishes old Yale, the home of knowledge, and where these spires now point the way to happiness here and hereafter.

Some have apprehended important changes or modifications from the amalgamation of the Anglo-Saxon with the Spanish-Indian population of Mexico:—this is a groundless anticipation. The crossing of different families of any single one of the three great subdivisions of mankind, gives perhaps a common offspring of improved character; but a people sprung from a mingled origin of any two of the great subdivisions alluded to, has never been permanent; nature abhors a mongrel. And this truth teaches us the temporary duration of the Mexican who is of mixed Spanish and Indian blood; besides, the Indian is essentially inferior and less tenacious of life as an individual and as a race, than the white man. A mulatto race in like manner never has been and cannot be self-permanent; in a

very few generations, offspring are scarcely produced and seldom reared, but by recurrence to a pure stock on one or the other side. Nature will not allow it.

My spirit was stirred the other day as I read in Mr. Macaulay's History, that "the Puritan warriors often surrounded by difficulties, sometimes contending against threefold odds, not only never failed to conquer, but never failed to destroy and break in pieces whatever was opposed to them; that they at length came to regard the day of battle as a day of certain triumph, and marched against the most renowned battalions of Europe with disdainful confidence. Turenne was startled by the shout of stern exultation with which his English allies advanced to the combat and expressed the delight of a true soldier, when he learned that it was ever the fashion of Cromwell's pikemen to rejoice greatly when they beheld the enemy; and the banished cavaliers felt an emotion of natural pride when they saw a brigade of their countrymen outnumbered by foes and abandoned by allies, drive before it in headlong rout the finest infantry of Spain, and force a passage into a counterscarp which had just been pronounced impregnable by the ablest of the marshals of France." Fellow citizens, we have seen the descendants of the English of that day, on this continent, drive before them in headlong rout, with still greater disparity of numbers, the finest legions of the descendants of Spain in Mexico. But there are other and greater battles waging and to be waged between these two people; and we shall see the Anglo-Saxon pioneers of the southwest, force a passage into the counterscarps of Mexican ignorance and superstition, however impreg-

nable they may appear. We are of the race of our fathers; and the appeal we have made to the past history of man, shows that we need entertain no apprehension but that we shall inherit the physical power and intellectual capabilities of those from whom we sprung. It will depend on ourselves to use them. An ardent sun may develop a more fiery temperament and brilliant genius in the southwest; while the north shall continue to be distinguished for indomitable energy and patient thought, yet the grand lineaments of character remain unchanged; and the autochthones in the regions of our country, will form no inefficient or enervated portion of this mighty republic. Nature has not stinted genius nor energy to the dwellers in the hot countries of the east, similar to our own ardent climes. But besides nature's law, we have two vast powers, by their origin peculiarly American, for maintaining the sameness and homogeneousness of our people, now spread and still further spreading over regions and through climates most diverse. The application of steam to locomotion by the immortal Fulton, has made the inhabitants of the most distant sections personal neighbors. The Electric Telegraph of the illustrious Morse, by reducing to practice the old metaphysical idea of quick as thought, brings the intellect of the whole country for useful purposes, into immediate and continual intercourse. The American people must continue to constitute in a permanent degree, however broadly spread, one identical race, one people:—it will be the highest wisdom if we continue to form one nation. Woe to the man or the party which through mad ambition or pharisaical fanaticism, would rend asun-

der the union, and split into different and necessarily antagonistical governments a race so homogeneous. If causes which did not prevent our fathers from uniting, shall now suffice to dissolve the bond, under which we have so grown and prospered, we shall but repeat the wretched histories of rival states. Our resources will be expended, our energies worse than wasted, in rivalries and wars among ourselves. But if we are true to the great destiny which beckons us onward, it is scarcely too much to assert that the child now lives, who shall see this American people extending from the Lakes to the Isthmus, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and constituting one nation, not only dictate the law to other nations, but also be universally recognized as the great standard-bearer of civilization and good government, of knowledge and religion, the light, security and hope of the whole world. God has given us the physical and natural capacity; God has given us this broad and noble country; may He give us the wisdom to do our duty.









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